



# FEMA *Forward*

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## \$1.8 Billion in Preparedness Grants Announced



DHS Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Administrator Paulison announce preparedness grants at a recent briefing.

threat areas,” Chertoff said last month at the Press Briefing Center at FEMA headquarters.

Administrator Paulison noted the federal, state and local partnership involved in the preparedness grants process. “States are being kept apprised of the planning cycle as we move into FY 2009,” he said. “This process includes continued outreach to our state and local partners to get their feedback on potential changes or improvements to the grant programs.”

Grant awards were announced under five preparedness programs:

- Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), which includes the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), the State Homeland Security Program, the Metropolitan Medical Response System Program and Citizen Corps
- State Homeland Security Program — Tribal

- Operation Stonegarden
  - Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program
  - Nonprofit Security Grant Program
- Detailed information about FEMA’s preparedness grants programs is available at [www.fema.gov/grants](http://www.fema.gov/grants).

At a July press conference at FEMA headquarters, Secretary Chertoff and Administrator Paulison announced approximately \$1.8 billion in FEMA preparedness grants to bolster state, urban area and tribal government efforts to improve the nation’s readiness, response and recovery capabilities for both natural and man-made emergencies. The grants are part of the approximately \$3 billion in Fiscal Year 2008 preparedness funds that will be awarded this year.

In September, FEMA’s Grant Programs Directorate and National Preparedness Directorate will award another \$92 million in grants for Emergency Operations Centers, interoperable communications, and national preparedness training programs. FEMA also will announce equipment awards to state and local fire, law enforcement, and emergency management agencies through CEDAP, the Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program.

Finally, awards will be announced for the National Emergency Technology (NET) Guard program. NET Guard will support four pilot initiatives to establish teams to help communities quickly reestablish information and communications technology following a disaster.

Roughly \$25 billion in grants has been awarded since Fiscal Year 2002 to state, local, and tribal governments, as well as nonprofit organizations.

“These awards reflect a continued and serious commitment to first responders throughout the homeland, particularly in the highest

## DAE Benefits Bill Makes Headway

Before adjourning for the August recess, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee reported a bill, HR 6658, that includes a provision to allow Disaster Reservists access to the same health care system available to full-time FEMA employees.

The bill next must be voted on by the full House and sent for consideration to the Senate. Then the two bill versions, if different, will have to be adjudicated by a House-Senate Conference Committee before a final bill can be enacted and signed into law by the President.

As Yogi Berra once said, “It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.” But the House bill is a positive sign that health benefits for DAEs may be on the not-too-distant horizon.

*“FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.”*

## Australian Emergency Management Delegate Visits

David Imhoff, Assistant Director, Capability and Operational Coordination, Emergency Management Australia, recently visited FEMA headquarters, Region IV, and Region IX to learn more about emergency management in the United States.

Imhoff's introduction to emergency management was as a Consul in the Solomon Islands, where he managed the consular section, including the on-the-ground operations of the 2000 evacuation of Australians.



Australian EM David Imhoff meets with Region IV staff

He has been involved in several emergencies since, including the Australian government response to the 2006 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the 2003 SARS crisis and the 2002 Bali bombings, for which he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

At FEMA headquarters, L.A. Lewis provided Imhoff with a briefing and tour of the National Response Coordination Center. Imhoff also met with Mike Tamillow, Supervisory Program Specialist, Ops Response, and Paul Schwartz, Interagency Planning Team Lead, who reviewed FEMA's response and recovery operations.

In Region IV, Imhoff received briefings by



David Imhoff and RIV Deputy Administrator Mary Lynne Miller

Deputy Administrator Mary Lynne Miller, the Defense Coordinating Officer and the Federal Preparedness Coordinator. In addition to touring the Region IV Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC), while in Atlanta Imhoff also visited *The Weather Channel* and was hosted by the Georgia

Emergency Management Agency.

Imhoff then moved on to Region IX where he toured the RRCC and the new All-Hazards Watch Center, and was briefed by Bob Fenton, director of the Region IX Disaster Assistance Directorate, on the response to the 2007 and most recent wildfires.

## Well Goodbye Dolly

Though recovery efforts are still underway in Texas, Hurricane Dolly didn't pack the punch many had feared.

As in previous recent storms, FEMA had staff and equipment on the ground early, ready to respond if needed.

FEMA's National Response Coordination Center in Washington and the Regional Response Coordination Center in Denton, Texas were in full operation. Two state liaison officers were deployed to the Texas State Emergency Operations Center.

An Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) was also deployed to the Initial Operating Facility in Austin to support the state with coordination of federal assets as

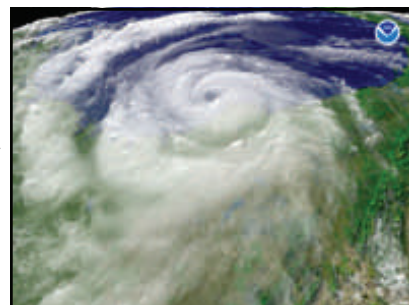
needed. An IMAT is composed of 15 specially trained individuals designated to be the first federal responders on the ground charged with coordinating federal activities and providing initial situational awareness.

Since the July 24 declaration, almost 20,000 individuals have applied to FEMA for disaster assistance. FEMA has approved more than \$9 million to eligible individuals and households under its Individuals and Households Programs (IHP).

Coastal residents need to be prepared for more

storms this hurricane season. In its August update to the Atlantic hurricane season outlook, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center increased the likelihood of an above-normal hurricane season and raised the total number of named storms and hurricanes that may form. Forecasters attribute this adjustment to atmospheric and oceanic conditions across the Atlantic Basin that favor storm development — combined with the strong early season activity.

NOAA now projects an 85 percent probability of an above-normal season — up from 65 percent in May. The updated outlook includes a 67 percent chance of 14 to 18



Hurricane Dolly on July 23, 2008. Source NOAA

named storms, of which seven to 10 are expected to become hurricanes, including three to six major hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher on the Saffir-Simpson Scale. These ranges encompass the entire season, which ends November 30, and include the six storms that have formed thus far.



**FEMA**



## Your Opinion Please: Answer Our Surveys

Three different surveys will give FEMA employees the opportunity to weigh in on several important issues.

The Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis recently asked all FEMA employees to respond to a short survey to aid in FEMA's preparations for the Administration transition in January. The survey will help identify employee thoughts and ideas on the transition to ensure everyone's questions and concerns are fully addressed and that the agency and its critical mission continue to operate seamlessly throughout the transition period.

In its first few hours, over 1,000 FEMA employees took the

time to answer the survey, and the FEMA Transition Team is already using those responses to shape its communications and other planning.

Responses to the FEMA Survey on the 2009 Administration Transition are due by August 22. The survey is available online at: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspxsm=66iGv52E5ouyj3d5oxc4Gg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspxsm=66iGv52E5ouyj3d5oxc4Gg_3d_3d).

Some employees also have been asked to respond to the Office of Personnel Management's 2008 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS). Employees for that survey are randomly selected. The survey launched on August 1, 2008 and

will conclude September 26, 2008.

The FHCS measures employee perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. The survey provides general indicators of how the federal government is running its human resources management systems.

It serves as a tool for OPM to assess individual agencies and their progress toward "green" status on Strategic Management of Human Capital under the President's Management Agenda. FEMA's responses are part of the DHS

survey. The survey gives senior managers critical information to answer the question "What can I do to make my agency work better?"

Results from the FHCS are expected in late 2008.

Finally, FEMA's Human Capital Division will conduct a 12-question employee survey as part of its BEST — Building Employee Strengths and Talent — initiative that was the subject of the August 19 All-Hands Meeting. That survey should be disseminated within the next several weeks.

So take the time to answer these surveys and give us your opinions. FEMA wants to hear from you!

## Tickets, Dinner & Goodies What's the Harm?

The White House Counsel's Office recently issued a memorandum that provides advice regarding the need to carefully observe the Standards of Conduct in connection with the upcoming Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

Be aware that your activities in connection with partisan political activities must conform to the restrictions of the Hatch Act and Departmental policy. While simply attending most purely social activities connected with national conventions probably does not violate the Hatch Act, each employee must carefully understand the specific facts of each invitation and evaluate it in light of the restrictions to observe.

For instance: career SES, Secret Service employees, administrative law judges and members of the Office of Investigations, USICE, have greater restrictions than some other government employees. Similarly, non-career employees, by Departmental policy, must observe narrower limits.

All government employees are urged to consult with their designated ethics agent to ensure that participation in a convention-related event is proper or whether they may accept an offered gift.

Remember: free admissions to dinners, receptions or entertainment in connection with a political event could end up costing a great deal if you are found to be in violation of the Hatch Act or DHS policy. Check first before accepting any gift or invitation. More ethics information is posted at: <http://ogc.fema.net/ethics/>

## Public Alert Radios Provided to Schools

FEMA is working with three other federal agencies to distribute more than 182,000 Public Alert Radios to preschools, Head Start programs, K-12 nonpublic schools and nonpublic school central offices, K-12 school district offices and post-secondary schools. The August-September distribution completes a program that has placed these life-saving radios in every school in the nation. The radios sound an alarm to alert school personnel about hazardous weather and other emergencies, even when other means of communication are disabled.

The radios are distributed by the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with funding from the Department of Homeland Security and assistance from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.

The newest distribution will ensure that every school in the nation has access to these life-saving radios. In two earlier phases, the program distributed radios to all 97,000 K-12 public schools across the country.

Commonly known as NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, these Public Alert Radios provide alerts and safety steps on a wide range of emergencies—from an approaching tornado, a telephone outage disrupting 9-1-1 emergency services, local roads overrun by flash floods, a derailed train posing a hazardous material threat or the urgent need to be on the lookout for an abducted child.

The program also encourages school officials, emergency managers, human service providers and Citizen Corps Councils across the country to partner and align their efforts with local emergency plans to build overall community preparedness. The Councils also can provide assistance to improve school safety plans and other emergency preparedness efforts.

For additional information on the Public Alert Radios for Schools program visit: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>.



# To FEMA: Thanks From Iowa

*The following is excerpted from a letter to Iowa FCO Bill Vogel from a Red Cross disaster mental health specialist who was deployed in response to the recent flooding:*

Perhaps one of the best kept secrets is the diversity of people who have come from all over our country to make up the FEMA staff. From one community to the next, there has always been a genuine caring and human face to FEMA. Staff have shared in common a genuine concern for the Iowans they were serving. I was able to see the stress that FEMA staff experienced through long hours with little or no time off. I was able to see first hand how thoughtful and caring they were to the frustrations expressed by registrants. Never did I encounter negativity or discouragement. I was able to observe their professionalism in honoring both the citizen and the FEMA program.

Perhaps the other best kept secret is how well FEMA works with the various voluntary organizations. As a clinical social worker with more than a moderate amount of experience in the areas of emergency and disaster mental health, I continued to be amazed and humbled by the degree of cooperation and partnership that has existed between FEMA and the faith community and within the faith community itself. I think very, very few people are aware of this cooperative spirit or its importance.

Perhaps these should not be secrets so well kept.

Thank you for what you do — and please thank those who have come to Iowa to help us.

Sincerely,

Ken Zimmerman DCSW LISW



New mobile homes arriving at FEMA's Grundy County Emergency Housing Staging site in Iowa are checked in by Ricky Bickerstaff with Receiving; A.J. Hughes with Planning; and Rusty Clarke, the EHS Deputy Site Manager. Greg Henshall / FEMA

## Getting FEMA Connected

Looking for the phone number of a FEMA colleague?

FEMA has a new, improved and up-to-date phone directory accessible via the FEMA intranet ([online.fema.net](http://online.fema.net)).

The new directory allows FEMA personnel to easily look up names, phone numbers and offices through an electronic directory that is tied into the FEMA e-mail system maintained by IT. This linkage ensures that the telephone directory will be automatically updated whenever a new e-mail account is added into the system.

To access the directory click on the "Employee Phonebook" link on the intranet homepage under "Tools." Type in the individual's name and press search. It's that simple.



## Buy, Buy FEMA

Attention shoppers: Check out the latest in FEMA and other DHS apparel and accessories at the Homeland Security Online Gift Shop. The shop's Web site offers a host of items, including golf shirts, lapel pins, coins, plaques, awards, shadow boxes and gifts.

The shop also has "made to order" items such as men's and women's shirts, luggage and hats. There's even a clearance section for all you bargain hunters. You can access the site from the DHS Online intranet page or visit:

[http://www.pcxhost.com/store/st7/tp8/home.jsp?unique=1218461207543&sid\\_0C78C51351520682F074F255FA0B70DD79870A8F&SessionID=11102018&source=launch](http://www.pcxhost.com/store/st7/tp8/home.jsp?unique=1218461207543&sid_0C78C51351520682F074F255FA0B70DD79870A8F&SessionID=11102018&source=launch)

## FEEDBACK

Please feel free to contact us with stories, news and items of interest to FEMA employees, as well as your comments, ideas, suggestions or questions.

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